

House Bill 4524—"Patient's Right to Know" Reform

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Good morning Chair Haines, Vice-Chairman Callton, Vice-Chairman Darany and Members of the Committee.

My name is Maria Zestos and I am a physician at the Children's Hospital of Michigan at the Detroit Medical Center. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning and to tell you why I **support** House Bill 4524, the "Patient's Right to Know" reform.

As a board certified anesthesiologist and pediatrician, I know that every parent in the room understands there is nothing more stressful and overwhelming than when one of our children is sick or injured and in need of medical care.

Unfortunately, at a time when clarity is most important, **parents are often faced with a health care system that can be confusing.**Confusing **titles** and rushed **introductions** may cause patients to mistakenly believe they are meeting with one kind of member of their health care team when they are actually meeting with someone with a different set of experiences and training. This is especially true of younger patients and their families who are often undergoing unexpected and highly emotional circumstances.

Our health care system has to do better for Michigan patients, especially our kids and their parents and the Patient's Right to Know reform is a tremendous step in that direction.

Patients deserve to have the best, most accurate information about who is treating them and what their health care provider is trained and licensed to do. House Bill 4524 puts patients first by eliminating some of this confusion and giving families more information to help them make more informed choices.

In my role as chief of anesthesiology at Children's Hospital I review all patient complaints from the surgical suite. Most of the complaints stem from miscommunication of one sort or another. Being unclear about what to do, what is going to be done, what can happen, how long things will take and who told you what about all of this. In hospitals, we work as a team and everyone has their role. We take time for the physician to tell their role, for the nurses to tell their role and for technicians to explain their role. Everyone's role is unique and vital to successful care.

I have personal experiences with how confusing the health care system can be and how important it is to give patients clarity.....Several years ago, I was called to the pre-surgical area because the family with whom I had earlier spoken, had questions for the physician before proceeding. When I walked into the room and re-introduced myself as the physician who was going to care for their child, the mother said she didn't realize I was the physician and had not wanted to proceed believing she had not seen her child's physician. I understood I had not been clear enough about who I was and just my introduction put her fears to rest. She explained that she simply thought I was a different member of the health care team entirely,



and was relieved to finally know who was who. She also said everything I said before was just fine.

And I now wear a name badge during all of my interactions with patients, to prevent that kind of confusion from ever happening again. I even have a dummy badge so that if it gets flipped over you can see my name on both sides.

The Patient's Right to Know reform can help address this kind of confusion by ensuring an extra level of transparency for patients across the state. Many hospitals do this already but not all, and not consistently.

Guaranteeing patients the right to know who is delivering their health care will empower them to rely on what their health care providers tell them. I urge you to vote YES on House Bill 4524 and to put patients first.

Thank you for the time and the opportunity to testify about this patient-focused legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.